

JUN 7 1966

AFRICA AID GROUP TOLD TO REGISTER

U.S. Bids It File as Agent of Foreign Principal

The Department of Justice has called on a group raising funds to aid South African prisoners to register as "agent of a foreign principal." The group has defied the order, and reports it has backing from major civil liberties organizations.

The group involved is the Alexander Defense Committee, at 875 Broadway, at 18th Street, which was named for Dr. Neville Alexander, a scholar of racial ancestry. Dr. Alexander was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment in April, 1963, on charges of plotting with 10 other persons to overthrow South Africa's apartheid regime.

In statements made public by the defense group yesterday, Mel Wulf, legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union, said the Foreign Agents Registration Act was being misused as a "weapon of harassment."

Mr. Wulf said the act was intended to disclose an employee relationship with "a foreign power," and not to require registration by a group "organized to defend an individual against persecution by a foreign government."

Rowland Watts, president of the Workers Defense League, said the Alexander group's "purposes make it the agent of all the people of the United States who believe in freedom and democracy for all the world." The executive committee of the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee said, "The families which it helps are its beneficiaries, not its masters."

Receives Letter

The Alexander group said it had received a letter from Assistant Attorney General J. Walter Yeagley dated May 20. The letter said the department had received information that the committee had been collecting funds in the United States "for the benefit of Dr. Neville Alexander and other individuals" in South Africa, who under the

law would be "foreign principals."

The letter called on the committee to register with a detailed account of its receipts, expenditures and activities. Under the act, officers failing to register a group may risk \$10,000 fines and five-year prison sentences.

Mrs. Berta Green, corresponding secretary, said the Alexander Defense Committee was formed in February, 1965, to help finance court appeals, on the urging of friends of Dr. Alexander. She said it had raised more than \$10,000 and had sent \$4,500 to South Africa

to Dr. Alexander's mother and others for relief.

The committee has about 1,000 persons who have attended meetings, with branches set up in Detroit and Los Angeles and plans for 12 more. Mrs. Green said, Paul B. Boutelle, chairman, is a taxi driver who was a Freedom Now party candidate for State Senate in Harlem in 1964, and later joined the Socialist Workers party, a Trotskyite group.

A current fund appeal, Mrs. Green said, is being sent out over the signature of Representative John Conyers Jr., Democrat of Michigan.

In a protest to President

Johnson, the committee asserted the South African Government had recently liquidated Defense and Aid, which it called the last open legal-aid organization for opponents of Prime Minister Hendrik F. Verwoerd.